

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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SUBJECT: CUBANS MOBILIZE WORKERS AND STUDENTS FOR AGRICULTURAL
TASKS

1. CUBAN PRESS, SINCE MAY 27, HAS CALLED FOR MASS MOBILIZATION
OF WORKERS AND STUDENTS TO PERFORM URGENT AGRICULTURAL TASKS IN
JUNE AND JULY. THIS NEED FOR MANPOWER ON HOME FRONT, EVEN AFTER
NOW IMMINENT END OF SUGAR HARVEST, MAY INHIBIT CUBAN PERFORMANCE
OF MILITARY ROLES IN ETHIOPIA OR ANGOLA DURING EARLY SUMMER THAT
REQUIRE REINFORCEMENTS FROM ISLAND.

2. PRESS HAS STATED THAT "TENS" OF THOUSANDS OF WORKERS AND
STUDENTS WILL BE ASKED IN JUNE AND JULY TO "VOLUNTEER" TO REMOVE
WEEDS FROM CANE FIELDS, TO SEED AND FERTILIZE CANE PLANTINGS,
AND TO TEND VEGETABLE AND ROOT CULTIVATION. WHILE NO TOTAL
ANTICIPATED FIGURE IS GIVEN, PRESS POINTS OUT THAT IN 1977
FIFTY-SEVEN THOUSAND SECONDARY AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS
WERE MOBILIZED FOR WORK DURING SUMMER MONTHS. IN ADDITION,
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THIRTY THOUSAND WORKERS FROM SUGAR MILLS MOVED TO FIELDS.
THIS YEAR'S TOTAL COULD BE GREATER SINCE FOR FIRST TIME
FEMALE STUDENTS WILL BE PARTICIPATING (ONLY OVER AGE 16
AND NOT IN STRENUOUS WEEK REMOVAL FROM CANE FIELDS). STUDENTS,
IN CONTRAST TO LAST YEAR, WILL ONLY BE WORKING IN PROVINCE
IN WHICH THEY LIVE (WITH EXCEPTION OF RESIDENTS OF PROVINCE
OF CITY OF HAVANA WHO WILL BE EMPLOYED IN HINTERLAND).

3. SELECTED, INITIALLY AVAILABLE MOBILIZATION TARGERS FOR SUMMER 1978 ARE AS FOLLOWS: CITY OF HAVANA - TEN THOUSAND STUDENTS, PROVINCE OF HAVANA - SIX THOUSAND STUDENTS, MATANZAS - FIFTEEN THOUSAND WORKERS, AND CIENFUEGOS - THREE THOUSAND WORKERS. UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WILL DEPART FOR FIELDS ON JUNE 20 SPEINDING TWENTY-ONE DAYS THERE. SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS WILL EAVE JULY 8 FOR TWENTY-ONE DAYS.

4. COMMENT: CASTRO PUBLICLY REGRETTEED NEED FOR 1977 MOBILIZATION FOR CANE FIELD CLEANING, TYING IT TO LACK OF HARD CURRENCY FOR PURCHASE OF HERBICIDES. PRESUMABLY, BOTH REGRET AND SHORTAGE OF FOREIGN FUNDS ALSO APPLY THIS YEAR. CHANGE OF 1978 PLANS TO PERMIT STUDENTS TO WORK IN PROVINCES WHERE THEY LIVE RESPONDS TO COMPLAINTS FREQUENTLY VOICED BY PARENTS ABOUT TRANSPORTATION SHORTCOMINGS WHICH MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO VISIT THEIR CHILDREN IN COUNTRYSIDE. (FYI BESIDES CURRENT EXTRAORDINARY MOBILIZATION, SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS ARE REGULARLY SENT EACH YEAR TO SCHOOLS IN COUNTRYSIDE FOR FORTY-FIVE DAY PERIOD TO HELP WITH AGRICULTURAL TASKS. END FYI) PARTICIPATION FOR FIRST TIME OF GIRLS MAY REFLECT MANPOWER SHORTFALL, THOUGH MORALE MAY BE PRINCIPAL CONSIDERATION.

5. IN ANY EVENT, NEED FOR MASS MOBILIZATION AGAIN IN 1978 WILL POSTPONE UNTIL BEGINNING OF AUGST AVAILABILITY OF MANPOWER USUALLY FREED IN POST-SUGAR HARVEST "DEAD SEASON".
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GIVEN NEED FOR SUGAR MILL REPAIRS BEFORE PROJECTED EARLY BEGINNING OF 1978-79 SUGAR HARVEST IN NOVEMBER, CUBANS MAY BE OPERATING UNDER TIGHT MANPOWER STRICTURES INTO 1979 - A FACTOR WHICH MAY CONDITION THE TYPE OF MILITARY OPERATIONS THEY ARE LIKELY TO UNDERTAKE IN ERITREA AND ANGOLA. END COMMENT.
GLASSMAN

NOTE BY OC/T: MESSPGE DELAYED IN TRANSMISSION.

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